

I love doing puzzles and am always looking for my next challenge. And the puzzle I want to try next is called the Krypt. The puzzle is one weird shaped spiral. No two pieces are alike. They are all different odd shapes. And the entire puzzle is black with no picture. So you don't have the box to go off. You just have to pick up random pieces and try to put them together. That is exactly how a lot of people approach the Bible. They don't have any idea what the big picture is. And they just take random verses and stories and try to put them together.

When I was a leader on campus in college, one of my jobs would be to look in and train and kind of recruit small group leaders. I always know a bunch of different questions that we would ask trying to get to know people but two of the things I would always ask is one I would ask him just tell me the gospel. Just tell me the story of scripture. It was always amazed with how few people are able to articulate the Bible.

Even in church. Even with people who have grown up studying the Bible and attending Bible studies and going to conferences and reading books and even reading their Bibles all day long might know a lot of stuff, but don't know how to put it together.

I had a professor in seminary who remarked that seminary taught him how to cut the Bible up and how to explain all these different pieces, but it left him ill equipped for how to put it back together again.

This is one of my concerns with us as Christians. My concern is that we might know a lot of random theology and we might know a lot of random Bible verses, but we have no idea how to explain the entire Bible. We are like a people trying to put a puzzle together when we don't have the box and we don't know what it is.

So this morning, I'm gonna do something really different. This morning I want to try and show and remind us with the picture on the box is. This morning I'm gonna try to preach and tell you the whole Bible.

And I actually had to do this at my very first class in seminary at Dallas. That was basically the entire class was we each got assigned a day and the professor made us go through and tell the story of scripture. And it was weird and it was different, but it was so glad they did it because it set the

tone just for the rest of my schooling, but the rest of my study of the Bible. Because now I know how this all fits together in one story.

Now, obviously, I'm not gonna be able to tell every story. I won't be able to explain every nuance or hit your favorite Bible verses. But my hope and what my intention is trying to be here. Is that I want us to get and be refreshed with a large story of the scriptures is.

So it's diving I will start by reading 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Point number one: **Knowing the overall story of the Bible will help you know the Bible.**

Again, before I dive into all of the scriptures and kind of tell you what the story is.

I just want you see that knowing the large story of scripture will help you understand the rest of it.

That when we can understand the entire narrative and the story of the scriptures and the story of what God is doing in the Bible, then when we come to a particular book and we come to a particular place, we can know where to put it.

Because often times we just we read the Bible randomly we open up to different books.

We read stuff like the Old Testament prophets and we have no idea what to do with it.

We don't know where to fit it, so we don't even try.

We got a puzzle recently that has a bunch of crazy pieces.

And it's not just that they're shaped funny. It's they are shaped weird and ways that don't make any sense.

The puzzle has edges in the middle of the puzzle.

There are some pieces that are shaped like music notes or a manta Ray.

One of the ones we did have eight different pieces that were butter butterflies.

And so there are times that reading the Bible can feel like that you'll look at this and go. What in the world am I supposed to do with that?

But if you have the picture you can look at the picture you can look at the crazy piece and you can see OK I don't know how this is gonna work, but I know it's gonna go here and I can't help you put it together.

So that's how understanding and remembering the narrative of scripture in the entire story of scripture helps and aids us when we come to things that we do not understand.

We can place it.

We can say OK I do not know what Obadiah is doing and what he's trying to explain here.

But we can say OK I know that the prophets come to rebuke gods people or to rebuke other nations whenever they're violating the law of Moses and so they're distributing awards or they're distributing punishment.

And then most of these profits take place either and the times of the kings or exile.

I'm still having the big picture in mind and helps us when we're trying to wrestle with other things.

The other thing I want you to see is that there's one story of scripture, but there is many different ways to tell that story.

I'm gonna give you one as I go through it and try to teach you and then explain and just remind us of what the entire narrative of the story of God is.

But it isn't the definitive or the only way to do this.

In part of that is because the Bible is such a deep and incredible book, you will never ever exhaust its depths.

You'll never be able to completely explain everything that is in the Bible.

There is always more to see and learn in different ways of looking at old truths.

OK, that is enough set up and if we're gonna do this, we need to go ahead and get into it.

So here's your point here is your overarching theme of scripture.

The story of the Bible is the story of God's kingdom coming into the world.

In the beginning, God created and created the heavens in the Earth and He made it good.

He made all of the animals and all of creation, and He specifically created two people made in His image, Adam and Eve.

Into them, He gave a charge and a command, and He placed them in charge of His kingdom.

He gave them dominion over the world and said rule well.

Care for my creation. Name the animals, but there's only one thing you can't do. Don't eat from this tree.

And unfortunately, almost immediately Adam and Eve failed in their duties.

They took from the fruit and they rebelled against God.

They failed to let God's kingdom, fully and righteously manifest itself on the Earth through their life and their work.

And so they were cast out from the garden.

And now sin and death entered into the world.

A power that will continually resist and try to oppose God's kingdom.

But humanity gets another chance to try administrate the kingdom of God on earth. But they continue to fail.

Right away, a man murders his brother.

And while humanity multiplies and spreads, it does not spread the kingdom of God.

And sin and violence gets so bad that God comes and sends a flood to wipe out humanity and start again.

And so God chooses Noah who has found favor in God's sight to start again.

And now his family is saved through the flood through an ark and afterwards when they set feet on dry land again, God gives them the same command.

He gives humanity another chance to manifest God's kingdom.

God gives them the same command He gave Adam and Eve.

He wants them to spread and multiply on the earth manifesting the kingdom.

But again the people fail quickly.

Noah gets drunk and his sons don't fare much better.

Humanity continues to spread and to multiply, but instead of doing what God asked and spreading this kingdom over the whole world, they've decided to create their own empire and build a tower.

They went to build a monument to their own greatness.

They don't want to build the kingdom of God anymore.

They just wanna build their own kingdom and make their name great.

So the tower of Babel is created, not for the kingdom of God for the kingdom of man.

Mankind fails again, and so God in his grace comes, and he multiplies the languages on earth to force humanity to obey and to spread rule over the earth.

Now the kingdom of God will not come through all humanity.

It will come not through all of humanity, but through one particular nation and people.

God chooses one man to be the one who this new nation will come through.

Abraham has chosen by God to be the patriarch notice of a new nation but ultimately of the kingdom of God.

So then we get the stories of the patriarch of Abraham, his son and his grandson.

Men who God shows that this would be the family this would be the nation that he would manifest the kingdom through.

And they have great moments of faith.

Abraham has the moment where he's willing to sacrifice his son Isaac because God asked.

But I also have moments of failure like Jacob trying to barter and steal the blessing of God over soup.

And when the time of the patriarchs comes to a close, God has blessed them and they have multiplied.

They end up in Egypt, spreading the blessing of the kingdom to other nations, but still the kingdom of God hasn't fully come yet.

Hundreds of years go by and the people of God are now slaves in Egypt. And so God raises up a man this time.

Moses to come and be the one to deliver them.

He works miracles, and God since the plagues he destroys the gods of Egypt and he takes his people out.

But he doesn't just take them out of slavery and had them towards the promised land. He's trying to create his kingdom.

And he wants them to be a nation of priests.

They are the be the people who will manifest the kingdom of God.

And they will do it in a particular place.

A land that God has chosen as their inheritance.

The promised land.

Where the kingdom of God will be physically on the earth.

And so God gives them the law which we often call the law of Moses.

The law was not just meant to be a list of do's and don'ts.

It was not just a revelation of what it is and is not righteous.

The law was to make them distinct as a kingdom.

It was God telling them this is what the kingdom of God looks like.

If you want to manifest my kingdom on the Earth, then here's what you need to do.

Here is how you need to live.
Here is what you need to eat.
Here's what you need to wear and here's with how you are to worship.
So that the kingdom of God can be visible.
Anyone can look and see what the kingdom is like.
How it should be and what it is.

But the people fail very quickly.
Before they even get to the promised land, they already repeatedly violate the law and fail to bring God's kingdom.
God tells them that they will have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until another generation rises up.
Then there's another generation who will get the chance to see if they want to manifest the kingdom of God.
So even though Moses helped set his people free and help establish this, he never gets to step foot inside the land or the kingdom of God will be.

And Joshua comes in the next generation.
And he leads the people of God as they enter into the promised land.
The place where God has chosen that He wants His kingdom to come.
The problem is that there are other kingdoms there.
And these are kingdoms of the enemy, Satan.
These kingdoms are worshiping false gods.
God says in order for my kingdom to be here you need to destroy all the kingdoms of the enemy completely.
He tells him that they have to wipe out these kingdoms.
They can't let them stay and they can't let them mix.
Because the kingdom of God cannot mix with the kingdoms of this world.
And if they want to be the kingdom of God, they can't try to worship like these other kingdoms do.

And so it begins great. Joshua works many miraculous miracles.
He leads the people across the Jordan River on dry land.

The walls of the great city of Jericho come crumbling down without anyone lifting their swords.

And so at the end of Joshua's day, the people are finally in the promised land. They have a place and they have the land and this is where the kingdom of God will be built.

But their problem and their failure is that they don't finish.

They don't completely destroy the kingdoms of the enemy and they leave some of them.

And their failure to fully destroy the kingdom of the enemy, will mean their failure to be the kingdom of God as they were meant to be.

Next period of time we see is the time of the judges.

Because of the people did not fully conquer the kingdom of the enemy, the kingdom of the enemy come and conquer them.

We have repeated cycles and downward spirals of God's people failing.

They go and worship the gods of the enemy and the enemy conquers them.

After some time, they cry out and repent and ask God for mercy, and He shows it, and He sends judges to them who will come and redeem them and rescue them.

And things go well until the judge dies, and then they fail again and abandoned God again and are conquered again.

Some judges are great like Deborah and Othniel.

Others are a bit of a mess like Samson and Gideon.

Until the time of the judges ends with some of the worst most heinous acts of violence and sin in all scripture.

So the people come and God offers the new way.

The people demand that they can have a king so they can be like other nations.

They don't wanna be like the unique kingdom of God.

They want to be like the nations.

They want a king.

Because they think their failure has been because of bad leaders.

God's grace allows them to have kings, but He warns them. It won't go how they think it will.

Then we begin the era of kings.

Who were meant to rule over the kingdom of God as kings of God.

They are to rule like God wants them to rule. T

hey are to be men after God's heart instead of after their own hearts.

And we have a few bright spots and a few good kings.

Particularly David, who God chooses as king he doesn't let the people vote for this one.

And he's chosen, not because of his giftedness because of his charisma.

He hasn't even chosen because of his righteousness because he will have many failings.

But even the best king fails.

He fails repeatedly as often a sinful king and his kingdom totally falls apart by his grandson's day and descends into civil war.

But God promised to David and made a promise that one day a King would come from his line who would rule forever.

And that in the day of that king, the kingdom of God would fully come into the Earth the way it was always meant to be, and in the way that David never could.

So then we get the rest of the story of the kings first and second kings first and second Chronicles and there's a few good ones in there like Josiah who find the word of God you've tried to help the people again be the kind of kingdom that they were meant to be.

But it's largely a record of their failure and their sinfulness.

Of how the kingdom of God becomes far too like the kingdom of the world.

And during the reigns of many of the kings, there are prophets who continually come to speak to them.

There's the prophet Nathan, who comes to David to rebuke him for his great sin against Uriah and Bathsheba.

They all try to warn the people.

They try to tell them and point out their failures to obey God to manifest the kingdom of God.

The exposers the failures of the Kings to be the kind of kings who lead the kingdom of God well.

And despite the sincerity and the great efforts and the righteousness of many of the prophets, they are largely ignored.

Then we come to prophets like Jeremiah who come in warn Israel as it split into civil war, and is now no longer even a unified kingdom on earth, let alone unified with the kingdom of God.

Jeremiah and the other prophets warn them. Hey if you don't listen, and if you don't stop, God is gonna take us out of this land and out of this place. We will have to go into exile.

And the people fail to listen they failed to repent.

So for 70 years they are casting into Babylon into a foreign land.

But God still cares for people and brings them back.

They come back to the land, it's time for another chance.

Now will you be like the kingdom of God?

Would you live as you were supposed to live?

They do OK in the beginning Nehemiah rebuilds the walls.

Ezra helps rebuild the temple for worship.

But it only lasts for a little while until they fail again till their land is crushed once more in the kingdom is no more.

In between the old New Testament, we get 400 years. We are usually referred to as 400 years of silence.

It doesn't mean God wasn't doing anything, but the people of God certainly were not manifesting the kingdom of God.

All that has come is failure after failure after failure.

Until finally, the true king.

The king who will succeeded where all the kings have failed.

The king from the line of David who was promised.

Jesus is born in Bethlehem.

When Jesus comes, He repeatedly says that he is proclaiming the kingdom of God.

The people were excited at first because finally the Messiah has come.

They were looking forward to the king who would be born, who the one who would bring God's kingdom on earth, fully and truly.

Who would help them manifest the kingdom of God in a way they've never been able to before and who would not fail.

Someone who had a restore it was lost and take them to new heights.

But when Jesus preached about the kingdom of God, He talked about it in a way they didn't understand.

Because Jesus came to explain the kingdom of God is actually backwards and upside down from what they thought.

It was not going to come physically because God already tried that multiple times.

The kingdom of God needed to come spiritually first.

And Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of God through His death and resurrection.

He did not bring the Kingdom through armies of angels and revolutions.

He did not bring the Kingdom of God through might and power.

He brought the kingdom through suffering and death.

And His defeat was the beginning and announcement of the kingdom of God.

Because the people do not need better laws.

They need their sins forgiven.

They need to be given a new nature and new life.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He commissioned His disciples to spread the kingdom.

To preach the gospel and the good news of the Kingdom of God.

And at Pentecost, those gathered in the upper room were given power.

The Holy Spirit descended upon them like tongues of fire.

And they went and preached the kingdom.
They proclaimed it and everyone heard.
Because now the kingdom of God was not just for Israel.
Now the kingdom of God would come through the church.
And in the church every single tribe and tongue and nation is welcome.
All people were welcome to come in faith and find salvation and be a part
of the kingdom of God.

And the church spreads.
Not through conquering or power.
It spreads through suffering.
It spreads through the witness of martyrs like Stephen.
Who faced their deaths with faith.
Bearing witness to Christ and proclaiming the kingdom that is coming.
But the church struggles too.
There is hypocrisy and failure.
Leaders who fail and churches like Corinth that are a mess.
And they proclaim the kingdom, and it multiplies.
But it does not completely and will not completely manifest the kingdom
of God on its own.

So, we come to the end of the story.
The story of the Bible does not end with the success of the church.
It ends with the return of Christ.
He returns to bring resurrection and new life.
And His kingdom will come and fully manifest itself on earth physically.
He will gather His people and wipe every tear from every eye.
And for a thousand years, Christ will rule physically and spiritually.
Satan and His demons will be cast out and restrained.
Finally humanity gets a chance to experience the kingdom of God without
Satan's opposition.

Yet, there will still be some who resist.
Who hate Jesus and try to overthrow His rule.

Even with Christ right in front of them, there will be those who want nothing to do with Him.

Humanity will rebel again for the final time.

Satan will try one last time to overthrow God.

And he will fail.

They will all be cast out.

And finally death and sin will be no more.

The kingdom will reign in peace forever.

All will be as it was meant to be.

With Jesus Christ on the throne.

Now again, this is not the only way to read the scriptures.

That's not the only thing that you can trace through and helps you think about God's word.

You could do the same thing but point out the story of a loving God who's come to rescue His people.

And so you could trace it and show all the different ways and places that He is setting up in an acting his plan to save them the culminates with Jesus as it was finalized.

You could tell the story through the covenants God makes with His people.

You could trace how each book of the Bible points to Christ.

All of these are great options.

Maybe you would want to tell the story differently than I did.

Maybe there is a story you would leave out.

Or there is one you would want to be sure is included.

But personally for me, this is the way that I think about the story of scripture.

When I think about the gospel when I think about Jesus when I'm reading through the Old Testament, I'm thinking about it in terms of the kingdom of God coming into the world.

And so the story of the Old Testament is the story of the way that humanity so often failed to bring the kingdom of God until finally the kingdom of

God comes in Jesus Christ and will be fully manifested when he comes again.

But however, way you want to think about the scriptures encourage you we need to be refreshed and we need to be reminded of the whole story. Because if you don't know the whole story, if you don't know the larger narrative, you won't be able to put it all together.

And it's not about being able to remember all the patriarch's names or the kings and the judges are exactly what time the prophets came off the top of your head.

But if you just know, and are able to tell the story of the Bible, it will help you be able to engage the scriptures more.

The goal is being able to know the Bible.

To be able to pick up any book and not get totally lost.

You need to have a map.

Or a picture you can look at.

So when you pick up a strange puzzle piece you at least have some idea of where you need to put it.

When you come the the proverbs, you can know this is telling us the wisdom of the kingdom.

Song of Songs is showing what marriage should look like in the kingdom of God and what God's love for His people is like.

You might not know what to do with Obadiah, but you can know he was a prophet trying to help Israel and the nations stop their sins and return to acting like the kingdom of God.

It can also help us when people try to tell a different story.

When someone comes to you and says, well the Old Testament is bad but I like Jesus.

It shows that they don't know the whole story of the Bible.

They cannot put it together.

Or when someone tries to tell us the Bible is all about how GOd loves us and now we can do whatever we want to do sexually or be whoever we want to identify as because that is why Jesus came.

And if we know the whole story of the Bible, we can look and see if that fits.

So when we see the whole story we can understand when people are trying to put random pieces on our puzzle that do not fit.

Understanding the story, can actually protect us from error.

You don't need to be able to tell the whole thing as long as I have.

But you can work up to it.

You do need to have an idea of what the whole story of what God has done is.

A thirty second story.

A good one sentence summary.

Having something that small will allow you to read other parts of the Bible better.

It is a foundational part of our faith.

And it will vastly help you as you study God's Word.

So, where have we been this morning?

Knowing the overall (story) of the Bible will help you know (the Bible).

The story of the Bible is the story of (God's kingdom) coming into (the world).

We need to know the story.

Not just random Bible stories.

We need to know how the whole thing goes together.

Because the Bible is not a collection of random stories that have nothing to do with each other.

The Bible is telling one cohesive story.

Do you know it?